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REMARKS

The Examiner has required restriction of the claims to a single disclosed species of the invention for prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted in the event no generic claim is finally held allowable. The Examiner asserts the application claims the following patentably distinct species:

- Group I: Figures 1, 2a
- Group II: Figure 2b
- Group III: Figure 3a-3b
- Group IV: Figure 4a-4b
- Group V: Figures 5a-5b
- Group VI: Figure 6; and
- Group VII: Figure 7.

The Examiner further asserts that "[c]urrently, there appears to [be] no generic claim." Office Action at page 2.

Applicants wish to point out that Figure 1 is generic to each of the species of "tether means" disclosed and claimed in the application. In particular, tether means 42 is intended to be a generic term for the various exemplary embodiments shown in:

- Group I: Figures 1, 2a, 2b (tether cord 50)
- Group II: Figures 1, 3a, 3b (invertible sealing boot 56)
- Group III: Figures 1, 4a, 4b (first portion 68, helical spring 70 and second portion 72)
- Group IV: Figures 1, 5a, 5b (coil spring 70).

Figure 6 shows an alternative embodiment of bend radius control 46 (i.e., mushroom 78) for maintaining the minimum bend radius of optical fiber 44 that may be used with any of the disclosed embodiments of the tether means 42. Likewise, Figure 7 shows a specific embodiment of a receptacle 60 fixed to the end wall 34 of the enclosure 20 for receiving a preterminated connector 40 that may be used with any of the disclosed embodiments of the tether means 42. Accordingly, Figures 6 and 7 are also generic to all species of the invention. Based on the

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foregoing grouping of species, Applicants submit that at least claims 1, 2, 6-10, 14-16 and 19 are generic.

In response to the restriction requirement, Applicants hereby elect without traverse the patentably distinct species of the claimed invention shown in Figures 1, 3a, 3b, 6 and 7 (Group III as identified by the Examiner and Group II as identified by Applicants for the reasons stated above) directed to a tether means comprising invertible sealing boot 56. It should be noted that in this embodiment of the invention, the sealing boot 56 functions as both the tether means 42 and the sealing means. See Specification at paragraphs [035] and [037]. Applicants make the election for further prosecution on the merits to which the claims shall be restricted if no generic claim is finally held to be allowable. Currently, all of the pending claims 1-19 are readable on the elected species of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants submit that no claims should be withdrawn from further consideration pending allowance of a generic claim.

This response being fully responsive to the Office Action, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for examination on the merits. The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any other fee due in connection with the filing of this response to Deposit Account No. 19-2167. If an extension of time not already accounted for is required with this response, Applicants hereby petition for such extension of time and the Examiner is likewise authorized to charge the petition fee to Deposit Account No. 19-2167.

Respectfully submitted,



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